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ABSTRACT

This document consists of three papers presented at a symposium on cross-cultural human resource development (HRD) moderated by Connie Fletcher at the 1996 conference of the Academy of Human Resource Development. "Intercultural Adjustment of U.S. Expatriates in the People's Republic of China" (Hallett G. Hullinger, Robert E. Nolan) presents results of a study of antecedent conditions in the lives of 40 Americans and 7 Chinese living in Beijing, China that contributed to their successful adjustment. Seven categories of adjustment factors are identified: personality, expectations, prior overseas experience, motivation, language skills, intracultural and intercultural relationships, and preparation and training. "Cross-Cultural Training--Review of Literature and an Action Learning Approach" (Nienyu Keng) discusses a study that classified cross-cultural training research into three approaches; analyzed problems related to effectiveness of cross-cultural training and its design; and presented action learning as an alternative method. "Filters of a Family Kind: How They Impact Global HRD--and Why West Doesn't Always Meet East" (Verna J. Willis, Robert L. Dilworth) reports a study that explored how such filters can illuminate understanding of how to deal with HRD in a multicultural milieu, drawing contrasts between the United States and China and to a lesser extent, Japan and Indonesia. It shows how U.S. management and HRD are largely missing the important family-related filter and are extremely vulnerable to miscues and faux pas when dealing with Asian countries. Each paper contains references. (YLB)

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SYMPOSIUM
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Intercultural Adjustment of U.S. Expatriates in the People's Republic of China
Hallett G. Hullinger, Oral Roberts University
Robert E. Nolan, Oklahoma State University

Cross-Cultural Training—Review of Literature and an Action Learning Approach
Nienyu Keng, University of Texas at Austin

Filters of a Family Kind: How They Impact Global HRD—and Why West Doesn't Always Meet East
Verna J. Willis, Georgia State University
Robert L. Dilworth, Virginia Commonwealth University

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Intercultural Adjustment of U.S. Expatriates in the People's Republic of China

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A greater understanding of the antecedents of intercultural adjustment, particularly as they relate to Americans in China, can assist organizations in selecting, preparing, and supporting their expatriate workers. Interviews with 40 Americans and seven Chinese living in Beijing yielded seven categories of adjustment factors: personality, expectations, prior overseas experience, motivation, language skills, intracultural and intercultural relationships, and preparation and training. Of these, endogenous factors were of greater importance than exogenous factors.

The globalization of American business and the growing reality of a world economy shape the futures of many American organizations. The United States has more than 3500 multinational corporations, 55,000 companies with regular international involvement, and 40,000 firms that carry out periodic operations abroad (Harris & Moran, 1991). American companies have awakened to the potential of China in particular, both as a source of inexpensive manufacturing and as a market for American goods. China has the "fastest growing economy on earth," with an annual growth of over ten percent from 1991 to 1995 (Zhang & Liu, 1995, p. 3). The U.S. invested approximately $2.8 billion in China between 1985 and 1992 (Foreign Invasion, 1993). The total foreign trade between the United States and China in 1992 was nearly $17.5 billion (China Statistical Yearbook, 1993).

The internationalization of American business requires large numbers of on-site personnel who have expertise in doing business in the local cultural context. This need has been met both by hiring host nationals for management positions and by transferring Americans abroad for either short or long term service. Kobrin (1988) analyzed the assignments of expatriates and concluded that they play a crucial role in multinational corporations, as they alone understand both local and global conditions for the company. There is also a growing trend to view international assignments as not only a means to meet specific on-site management needs, but as a training ground for executives who may be located in the United States, but who will need to deal with global issues. Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) described the strategic importance of managers who have international experience, and saw them as crucial to the success of international firms. Many American multinational corporations have apparently adopted this view, as 70% of American multinational corporations send personnel overseas (Caudron, 1991). Solomon (1994, p. 88) stated that "Eventually, human capital will cross national borders as easily as computer chips and cars do."

Early Termination of Expatriates

Despite the importance of expatriates, a substantial number of Americans abroad are unable to complete their assignments. Caudron (1991) reports an early termination rate ranging from 18% to 68%, depending upon the location. Other estimates fall within this range (Copeland & Griggs, 1985; Marquardt & Engel, 1993). Nor do these figures reflect the reality that the expatriate who ultimately fails in the assignment is likely to have been ineffective for some time, possibly offending host nationals and damaging the long-term success of the organization (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Hofstede (1991, p. 226) observes, "Culturally clumsy expatriates can cause damage which is only noticed after their repatriation and which will easily be a multiple of the direct cost of their expatriation."

This failure also takes a toll on the individual in terms of career path, self-confidence and compounded stress on the family. Yet, failure in an overseas assignment is rarely due to lack of

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technical expertise, but rather because of an inability to adapt to cultural differences (Tung, 1981; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Marquardt & Engel, 1993).

The success of expatriates is of great importance for U.S. multinational corporations. Expatriates, and the organizations which send them, have an inadequate understanding of those factors that facilitate adjustment to the host culture. A greater understanding of the antecedents of this adjustment, particularly as they relate to Americans in China, would assist organizations in selecting, preparing, and supporting workers abroad.

The purpose of this study was to define and describe the antecedents of intercultural adjustment for American expatriates in the People's Republic of China. This study explores the expatriate's own experience of preparing for life and work in China and describes those factors the expatriate feels are important to adjustment.

Theoretical Framework

A number of studies have sought to identify the antecedents of adjustment, that is factors that contribute to adjustment, adaptation, and effectiveness (Hawes & Kealey, 1981; Tung, 1981; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985, Cui & Awa, 1992; Arthur & Bennett, 1995). The theoretical framework for this study is based on a model of cross-cultural adjustment used by Black and Gregersen (1991) in their survey research of adjustment of expatriates in Pacific Rim assignments. Specific antecedents explored in their study included previous international experience, culture-related training prior to assignment, time in the host country, job conflict and ambiguity, association with home nationals and host nationals, novelty of the host culture, and spouse's adjustment. Their hypotheses were confirmed only partially by a series of correlations between specific antecedents and measures of adjustment.

The interview guide developed for this study was based largely on the antecedents of expatriate adjustment identified by Black and Gregersen. Additional questions relating to self-efficacy (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) and motivation (Furnham, 1987) reflect themes that emerged during the pilot interviews.

Research Question

This study addressed the following question: What antecedent conditions or events in the lives of the expatriates contributed to their successful adjustment in China?

Implicit in this question was the desire to determine to what extent these factors are subject to outside influence, such as training or living and working environment.

Methodology

A review of the literature indicated that the majority of studies gathering new information about the adjustment of expatriates have used self-report questionnaires as the primary data source. While there are advantages to survey research, it was felt that, given the complexity of the adjustment process, it was desirable to obtain a more complete description of the expatriate's own experience of adjustment, a "thick description" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) of the context and how the various factors interrelate to shape the world of the expatriate. A qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with expatriates was used to better understand this process.

Although qualitative approaches are most often associated with exploratory research (Merriam, 1988), this type of research can be used to clarify and enrich areas that have also been the domain of previous quantitative studies. Collecting data by means of interviews allowed for more complete expression of ideas in a realistic context of one-to-one dialog. Interviews, as contrasted to surveys, also allowed for observations of nonverbal cues and other manifestations of affective aspects of a subject's adjustment process.

The population of interest in this study consisted of U.S. expatriates working in Beijing, P.R.C., specifically, professionals working in the fields of business, education and government. Following

Patton (1990), a purposeful sample was chosen to glean a maximum amount of information from what seemed to be information-rich cases. In qualitative research a sample is deemed adequate when additional cases appear to add no new information to the phenomenon under investigation. Based on the results of a pilot study of 12 subjects not involved in the final study, 40 U.S. expatriates were interviewed. Seven additional interviews were conducted with Chinese nationals who had worked extensively with U.S. expatriates.

The sample was determined by accessibility and the willingness of each subject interviewed to spend the necessary time with the researcher. In addition, subjects had to be assigned to work in China for one year or more, and must have lived in China for at least four months at the time of the interview. The 40 subjects interviewed included 15 females and 25 males, 20 of whom were married and 20 single at the time of the interview. The ages of the subjects ranged from 25 to 60, with an average age of 38. Twenty-two subjects worked in private business, 15 in education and 3 in U.S. government foreign service. Time spent in China as an expatriate ranged from 6 months to 9 years with an average of slightly more than 3 years.

The antecedents of expatriate adjustment explored by Black and Gregersen (1991) served as the basis of the interview guide. Items related to self-efficacy (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985) and motivation (Furnham, 1987) were later added to reflect themes that emerged during the pilot test of the original interview guide. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed by the interviewer. In addition to the tape recording, the interviewer maintained a log of comments regarding each interview. Written immediately after each interview, the log contained observations of the interview context, nonverbal behavior, and other impressions.

Results

The Americans who work in Beijing are a diverse group with a wide range of exposures to Chinese life. Expatriates with the U.S. Embassy or large corporations can live relatively insulated from real life in China. They may view China as but another assignment in their rotation or another step in their career path. Others live close to the people and are immersed in the Chinese language and culture; their personal and professional futures are in China. In between these extremes are many on both short and long term assignments, with varying degrees of interest and insight in their surroundings.

Most expatriates in the business area led somewhat tightly circumscribed, single focus lifestyles. They often had little time or energy for exploring the culture, studying the language, or making Chinese friends. Long workdays and grueling schedules were common. Like businesspeople, American Embassy personnel can live relatively independently of the local economy and culture. U.S. government employees are also subject to a non-fraternization policy that requires them to report significant contact with Chinese nationals. This can have the unfortunate consequences of limiting their interactions with the Chinese to merchants, taxi drivers, and others in impersonal situations. As perpetual outsiders, they may see only negative aspects of Chinese society and may not be inclined to pursue further relationships. In comparison with corporate and government employees, teachers are immersed in Chinese daily life. They live in Chinese neighborhoods, and their relatively low pay often denies them access to many of the western amenities and diversions available to other expatriates. The compensation for this is a more relaxed schedule and the potential for developing friendships with Chinese students and fellow teachers. Many teachers were observed to actively pursue opportunities to learn the language and culture.

Despite the variations in schedule and standard of living, the interviewees from business, education, and government responded to the interview with equal cooperation and candor. All groups proved to be insightful, articulate informants.

Emerging Themes Subjects' responses to the interview were remarkably consistent as well. What emerged from their comments was a portrait of the expatriate who is well-adjusted and effective in China, regardless of occupational assignment.

Personality. The single most consistent theme to emerge from the interviews was the preeminence of personality over all other considerations. While certain other factors such as attitudes, experiences, and preparation were seen as relevant, virtually all respondents focused on the notion of personality. Time and again, when discussing their own backgrounds and the successes and failures of fellow

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expatriates, subjects referred to characteristics which fell into the category of personality traits. How was this category described by the subjects? Descriptors included flexibility, tolerance and open-mindedness, independence, risk-taking, curiosity, patience, stability and sensitivity to different values. These personality characteristics were identified not only by the 40 U.S. expatriates, but by the seven Chinese informants, as well.

The interviewees felt that training, prior experience, and the availability of practical and emotional support are all mediated by the personality of the individual expatriate. Subjects made statements such as, "Personality is definitely most important.", "I think it completely depends on the personality." and ". . . if he has the wrong kind of personality he is not going to make it here."

Expectations. The second most saturated category was entitled, "expectations." Appropriate expectations were deemed crucial to making a good adjustment, and inappropriate expectations were frequently cited as a primary cause of failure. High expectations were associated with poor adjustment. Truly adaptive expectations, on the other hand, were seen to be lower than or equal to both living conditions and work accomplishment. In fact, several subjects insisted that one of the primary benefits of training and overseas experience prior to expatriation was the effect these had of lowering their expectations.

Prior Overseas Experience. Prior overseas experience proved to be the third major factor in adjustment. Surprisingly, the initial response to questions concerning the importance of prior overseas experience was negative. But, as the interview progressed, it became evident that these experiences had indeed made a contribution to the subjects' adjustment by shaping expectations and attitudes, as well as giving specific knowledge. If subjects had prior overseas experience, they appeared to have an increased sensitivity to cross cultural issues, were more flexible in aligning expectations with reality and were more tolerant of differences. Indeed, the majority of those interviewed had prior overseas experience.

Motivation and Well Defined Goals. The fourth theme to emerge from the interviews was that of the importance of motivation and well defined personal and professional goals. Though no questions were directed to the issues of motivation and goals, the majority of interviewees made implicit or explicit reference to their importance. A few respondents felt that motivation was the most important issue of all. As one teacher said, "People who really want to be here, they will be all right. If they don't want to be here, they won't adjust, they won't be able to handle it." Strong motivation and clearly defined goals facilitate adjustment. However, many expatriates interviewed felt that strength of motivation alone is not sufficient. They indicated that there are certain motives and goals associated with good adjustment, and others that lead to ineffectiveness or failure. Even the most highly compensated businesspeople rejected money as an appropriate motivator for an assignment in China. Virtually everyone contended that goals such as learning, personal growth, service, and making a contribution produced the most satisfactory results.

Language Skills. The fifth major adjustment factor identified was that of Chinese language skills. Interviewees distinguished between the roles of basic language skills and more advanced language skills. Basic language skills were said to facilitate activities such as shopping and transportation, allowing the expatriate to participate more fully in daily life. More advanced skills brought cultural understanding and an ability to relate to a broader cross-section of Chinese society. The importance of language skills differed according to the length of stay, personal goals, and the professional role of the expatriate. Only a few of those interviewed actually used their Chinese language skills in their work, but the majority either had fundamental language skills or were studying the language. Those who learned at least the most basic expressions allowing them to carry on daily tasks appeared to be the ones who adapted more successfully. The complete lack of language skills was observed to severely limit an expatriate's options and personal freedom.

Relationships with Americans and Chinese. The next major adjustment factor to emerge from the interviews was that of the expatriates' interpersonal relationships with other Americans and with the Chinese. The most important of these relationships were those within the expatriate's nuclear family. The well-being of spouse and children were closely linked to the expatriate's success and effectiveness. Family problems were cited most often as the reason for unhappiness or the inability to complete an assignment. At the same time, positive family relationships were a source of real strength and stability. Strong family bonds and agreement over the decision to live in China provided much needed support. Relationships with other Americans have the potential to be a source of practical and emotional

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support, but only if these countrymen are themselves having a positive experience in China. Virtually none of the expatriates in business or government had close Chinese friends, but educators reported that their Chinese friends played an important role in coping with daily life and in overall adjustment.

Training. The seventh and final factor contributing to successful adjustment was training. Though the majority of interviewees had not participated in a formal training program prior to their arrival in China, most felt that some type of preparation was helpful. The type and amount of preparation needed were seen as dependent upon the personality of the expatriate and the role played in China.

It should be noted that the researcher had fully expected training and preparation issues to be an important part of the interview. It was assumed that proper training would be a prerequisite to good adjustment, but in reality, preparation and training played a far less important role in the experience of the expatriate than was anticipated. A common response to questions about preparation was, "Nothing can prepare you for China!," followed by a hearty laugh. It was clear that many interviewees truly doubted whether any activity conducted outside the country could ready one for life in China. Several observed that some training programs can actually decrease the sense of urgency in attending to cultural differences.

Interviewees felt that any preparation that is given should include some basic language skills and practical instruction on daily life and common interpersonal interactions. They stated that preparation that is too abstract or is out of date contributes little to adjustment. In addition to practical skills, the primary benefit of preparation was the effect it had on expectations. Training was deemed to be especially beneficial if spouses and family members of working expatriates participated.

Discussion

Endogenous and Exogenous Factors The antecedents of adjustment that emerged in this study lend themselves to analysis in terms of endogenous and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors in adjustment are those which originate in and are a function of the person, such as personality traits and motivation. Exogenous factors are those which are in the environment or which are external to the person, such as work characteristics or spouse adjustment. Exogenous factors also include training and prior international assignments, which may have an effect on endogenous factors. This distinction between endogenous and exogenous factors may have implications for a more inclusive model of intercultural adjustment, but is not intended to constitute a model in itself.

The antecedents of intercultural adjustment of Americans in China are primarily characteristics of the individual expatriate. Endogenous factors such as personality, expectations, motivation, and knowledge determine almost completely the degree of intercultural adjustment and effectiveness. Apparently, training and experience can enhance effectiveness and even shore up weaknesses, but they cannot replace basic personality characteristics. The well-adjusted expatriate is first of all the *right kind of person.*

Exogenous factors such as prior overseas experience and specific training and preparation contribute to the success of the expatriate to the extent that they affect personality and expectations, and provide practical knowledge and language skills. Family relationships and the adjustment of family members have a significant impact on the completion of the assignment as well.

Recommendations for Selection The results of this study indicate that endogenous factors are most important for intercultural adjustment, making selection the most important step in the process of expatriation. If adjustment and effectiveness are affected primarily by personality characteristics, relatively stable attributes of the individual shaped by the totality of ones experiences, then the organization should put a great deal of effort into finding the right person to start with. The potential expatriate should have reasonable expectations of the overseas assignment, or an indication that his or her expectations are subject to modification. Prior overseas experience is a significant asset, especially experiences in Asia, China, or less developed countries. Experience that required a greater degree of independence and exposure to the host culture is preferable.

Though the goals of the candidate should be consonant with that of the organization, the organization should look for additional motivation based on a desire for personal growth and making a positive contribution to a foreign society. Chinese language skills, or the motivation and aptitude to gain them, are an asset.

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The spouse and family members should be considered in this selection process, and should display many of these characteristics as well. The spouse should be in agreement with the overseas assignment. It is also desirable for the spouse to have a history of working outside the home, and skills and background that increase the potential for employment.

Recommendations for Preparation Once identified, this individual and spouse should be provided with the information and experiences necessary to develop a realistic set of expectations concerning life and work. This may be best achieved through a look see visit, talks with experienced expatriates, and other information sources. Though training and formal preparation was a relatively low priority for the interviewees, it may be that the typical training program does not address those issues and attitudes that are most important for adjustment. Rather than dismissing training entirely, the results of this study should be used in planning the content and methods of training. A measure of training that includes an introduction to the language should be given before departure. The organization should take pains to ensure that the information given in training is relevant, realistic, and current. Erroneous information is worse than no information at all. Though a preferred mode of training was not indicated in the interviews, it seems clear that methods that have an impact on attitudes will be more productive than methods that impart knowledge alone. Methods that increase self-awareness and address affective as well as cognitive issues are more likely to influence adjustment.

Future Research Finally, the results of this study have shown that qualitative methods, especially the semi-structured interview, is an invaluable, but under used method for studying expatriate adjustment. Additional qualitative research is recommended, as well as studies addressing the role of personality, motivation, the expatriate family, and the universality of antecedents of intercultural adjustment.

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Cross-cultural Training—Review of Literature and An Action Learning Approach

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Both academia and business have to recognize that cross-cultural training is a bottom-line issue that must be dealt with in today's global competition. In the present study, cross-cultural training research was classified into three approaches: 1) development stages, 2) contingency, and 3) social learning theory. Problems that related to effectiveness of cross-cultural training and cross-cultural training design were observed and analyzed. A learning approach—action learning— was presented as an alternative method for conducting cross-cultural training.

Global competition is a significant issue which every major business in the United States must face in order to survive. The effort of expanding into international markets has created an upheaval within many U.S. businesses. Therefore, there is a greater need than ever for managers to think in the global context. Company decision makers have begun to realize that, in order to succeed in the emerging global market, corporate strategies have to respond to global competitive conditions. Due to the increases in international trade, competition, acquisition, and interaction, companies are forced to relocate thousands of their most experienced employees to various foreign nations or areas. Unfortunately, due to lack of proper cross-cultural training, between 16 to 40 percent of all American expatriates are not able to make the transition successfully and return home prematurely (e.g., Misa and Fabricatore, 1979). The costs associated with such failed assignments range from $50,000 to $200,000 (Tung, 1981) per case.

These high-cost failures among American expatriates reflects the difficulties expatriates and their families have experienced in making cultural adjustments. Research suggests that cross-cultural training could assist expatriates in the development of interpersonal skills, in the cross-cultural adjustments, and in the job performance required in the cross-cultural encounters (e.g., Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Therefore, cross-cultural training has been recommended as a means of facilitating effective cross-cultural interactions (Mendenhall, Dunbar, & Oddou, 1987). Although most American business organizations recognize the importance of cross-cultural training, they do not support or even use it. The most prevailing reason for the low use of cross-cultural training is that such training is thought to be ineffective (e.g., Tung, 1981; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Relevant research argues that such negative views about cross-cultural training are due to the isolation of human resource functions from mainstream business activities and the lack of support from top management (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). These, in turn, cause many faulty international human resource decisions and significantly high expatriate turnover rates.

This review attempts to, first, analyze the major development of theory in cross-cultural training since the 1980s. Second, by pointing out what has been overlooked in previous research, this article attempts to utilize an alternative approach—action learning—to direct research on *how* cross-cultural training can be conducted.

Review of literature

To show the diversity of approaches toward cross-cultural training, the following three different approaches: development stages, contingency, and social learning theory are discussed below.

Development Stages Approach It is commonly agreed that cross-cultural sensitivity is not natural. People employ a wide range of strategies from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism to deal with cultural differences. How people adapt to those strategies seems to be dependent upon

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the stages of their personal growth (Bennett, 1993). Hence, those who manage and design cross-cultural training have the responsibility to diagnose trainees' individual development stages and facilitate them toward more cross-culturally sensitive stages. Bennett argues that cross-cultural sensitivity development moves through cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. She assumes that people react to different cultures by, first, generating relevant categories for the existing differences. Next, they feel a threat to the stability of their worldview when they realize that their own culture is merely one of a variety of worldwide views, they feel a threat to the stability of their worldview. For instance, they may react defensively toward different cultures. And lastly, people develop a treatment for the threat by merging the cultural differences into universal categories and moving toward a common goal which results into the construction of their own identity. Based on these assumptions, Bennett proposes a development model of cross-cultural sensitivity as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The Ethnocentric Stages	The Ethnorelative Stages
I. Denial (people believe that cultural diversity only occurs elsewhere) 1. Isolation 2. Separation	IV. Acceptance (cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected) 1. Behavioral Relativism 2. Value Relativism
II. Defense (people evaluate a different culture as negative and inferior) 1. Denigration 2. Superiority 3. Reversal	V. Adaptation (people establish the framework for appreciating cultural difference) 1. Empathy 2. Pluralism
III. Minimization (people try to bury cultural difference under the weight of cultural similarities) 1. Physical Universalism 2. Transcendent Universalism	VI. Integration (people integrate disparate aspects of their identity into a new whole while remaining culturally marginal) 1. Contextual Evaluation 2. Constructive Marginality

Bennett then suggests, in order to effectively achieve learning objectives, different development strategies and activities could be utilized in different stages for cross-cultural training programs, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Development Stage	Strategies/Activities
Denial	Cultural Awareness activities
Defense	Emphasizing the commonality of cultures, especially in terms of what is generally good in all cultures.
Minimization	Simulations and reports of personal experience
Acceptance	Emphasizing the practical application of ethnorelative acceptance to cross-cultural communications
Adaptation	Dyads with other culture partners in face-to-face communications and discussions.

In summary, advocates of development stages approach suggest that the goals of cross-cultural training are to increase the trainees' awareness about their developmental stages (Bennett, 1993), to recognize the trainees' culturally held values, and to help them develop ethnorelativism.

Contingency Approach In choosing an appropriate training method, Tung (1982) classifies cross-cultural training programs under five categories: area studies, cultural assimilation, language preparation, sensitivity training and field experience. She argues that the degree of expected interaction and similarity between the native culture and host culture is important in determining the cross-cultural training. Therefore, if the expected interaction

between the expatriate and members of the host culture is low, and the degree of dissimilarity between the expatriate's native culture and the host culture is low, and as a result the content of the training should focus on task and job related issues and the level of rigor necessary for effective training should be relatively low. For instance, the area studies program would be sufficient in this case. If both the expected interaction between the expatriate and the host culture and the degree of dissimilarity are high, the content of the training should focus on the new culture and on cross-cultural skill development, and the level of rigor of such training should be moderate to high. In this case, all five types of training programs would be important, with particular emphasis on sensitivity training and field experiences. Trainers should assess the degree of consideration between these two extremes in basing the type of training program that would be appropriate for each individual.

However, without defining rigor and what determines rigor, Tung's framework is considered less useful for multinational companies to select for appropriate training methods (Black & Mendenhall, 1989).

Social Learning Theory Black and Mendenhall (1990) elaborate on the use of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory in cross-cultural training to develop skills which can be reproduced during actual cross-cultural encounters. They argue that to apply social learning theory to cross-cultural training frameworks is to answer the questions of why cross-cultural training is effective and which situations are best served by what specific training methods.

Integrated with social learning theory which argues that learning takes place by both observation and experience (Bandura, 1977; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992) and Tung's (1982) contingency approach, Black and Mendenhall (1989) and Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992) propose the "cross-cultural training tube" as a useful framework for cross-cultural training program designs (See Figure 1).

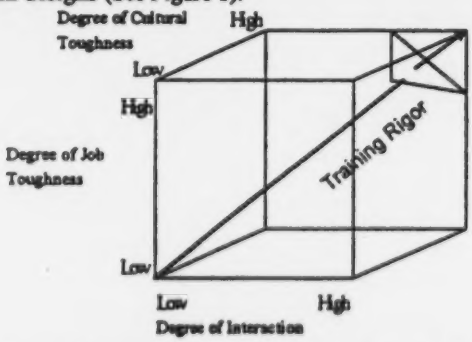

Figure 1. Integration of Cross-cultural Training Rigor and Main Contingency Factors
(Source: Black and Mendenhall, 1989, p. 528; Black, et al., 1992, p. 104.)

The assumption underlying the "training tube" is simple: the greater the cultural toughness, communication toughness, and job toughness, the greater the need for rigorous cross-cultural training.

The vertical axis shows the dimension of job toughness, ranging form low to high. The bottom horizontal axis represents degree of interaction, ranging from low to high. The top horizontal axis represents degree of cultural toughness, ranging from low to high. The diagonal line, which runs from the front left corner to the back right corner represents training methods and rigor, ranging from low to high. Thus, any point in the three-dimensional space can be interpreted as the combination of job toughness, interaction, and cultural toughness a person would face in a foreign assignment. The intersection of the point and the diagonal line can be determined by imagining a plane at a right angle and traveling on the same diagonal as the diagonal line. The plane is placed at a right angle because adjusting to a tough job overseas is easier than adjusting to the general culture or interacting with the local nationals (Black & Stephens, 1989; cited in Black & Mendenhall, 1989). When the plane intersects the point which

are plotted based on estimates relative to each of the three dimensions, it also intersects with a point on the diagonal line representing training rigor. That intersection provides a rough estimation of the training rigor required for the expatriates.

Researchers conclude that the content of the training would be a direct function of the three dimensions (Black and Mendenhall, 1989; Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall, 1992). Cross-cultural training programs then should be designed in accordance with the relative scores on each of the three dimensions.

Problems with Current Cross-cultural Training Strategies

Effectiveness of training programs Although the importance of evaluation is well recognized by both business and academia, few if any research has focused its energy on evaluating the effectiveness of cross-cultural training. An exception is the study done by Black and Mendenhall (1990). The conclusion of their study is straightforward: "a total of nine studies examined the relationship between cross-cultural training and adjustment... (all) found a positive relationship..." (pp. 118-119). However, without understanding how the training affected both the organization and the trainees, neither an improvement of the program can be made, nor can a measurement of the return on investment be quantified. Traditionally, training effectiveness is easily measured by counting the "smile sheets" after each training session and measuring how "satisfied" the trainees are. This measurement usually is known as the level-one evaluation—how learners feel about the training. Although the information obtained from this method has been argued not to be useful (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1967), due to the difficulties involved in estimating the effects at higher levels, it is still the prevailing method used by the majority of training professions. Furthermore, some organizations measure and evaluate the effectiveness of cross-cultural training by counting the numbers of trainees who have completed their assignments without coming home early versus those who return home without completing their assignments. For example, a comparable analogy would be to measure a soldier's combat training by counting the number of soldiers that return home in body bag versus those who return alive. Therefore, these methods lack the ability to assess the degree of improvement of the trainees in their cross-cultural training program, and further these methods do not help the organizations understand the degree of contribution the cross-cultural training has on the success of foreign assignments.

As a practice, businesses should place a higher level of consideration on the effectiveness of cross-cultural training. For instance, the second level in Kirkpatrick's (1967) model measures learning that has taken place during the training. The third level of evaluation provides evidence of the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes back to the job, and level four assesses the results to the organization. Each of these levels of evaluation should be carefully planned in order to justify the cost and time devoted to the training program. Moreover, to make the evaluation effective in determining whether or not trainees retains the new information and uses it on the jobs, whether or not the course material is appropriate and adequate, and whether or not trainers are competent, evaluation must play a more significant role in the process of program design should be implemented. Organizations should no longer be concerned with how good trainees "feel" about being trained or how well they score on a test in a non-work environment. Employers ought to know how cross-cultural training alters their behaviors, how those new behaviors affect job performance, and how new performance contributes to the bottom line number of any business.

Design of cross-cultural training Another problem associated with cross-cultural training research is that no instrument has been developed to measure either "cross-cultural sensitivity," (e.g., Bennett, 1993) "rigor," (e.g., Tung, 1982; Black and Mendenhall, 1990) or "degree of cultural, job, and communication toughness" (e.g., Black and Mendenhall, 1990). As a result, it creates a dilemma in most multinational firms. Since the importance of cross-cultural training has been gradually recognized by many multinational firms, decision makers understand that they need to have their own cross-cultural training courses designed with or without the help of the academia. Unfortunately, due to the absence of adequate instruments, the result of such

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designs sometimes are far from ideal. Having been trained within this problematic training structure, the expatriates often are ill-prepared before they are assigned abroad. Thus, early returns from the assignments seems to be an inevitable tragedy. Therefore, despite research's claims that the majority of Fortune 500 corporations are satisfied with their cross-cultural training programs (McFarland, 1995), there is no evidence that shows whether these satisfactions come from the exceptional designs based on recommendations from academia, or whether these designs result in their expatriates to have a lower turnover rate. Therefore, further research is needed on how to increase the practical application of cross-cultural theory in the industry, as well as on the cause-effect relationship between cross-cultural training programs and successful foreign assignments.

Action Learning—An Alternative Approach to Cross-cultural Training

The methodologies covered in the literature review mainly focus on the concepts of *what* a cross-cultural training should include. Little attention has been paid to *how* cross-cultural training should be conducted. On the one hand, organizations often recognize their learning objectives after the problems or needs are identified by the needs assessments or simply by their mission statements. Organizations would accordingly adopt any training methodology that is the most appropriate to their needs. They then would implement the training in accordance with the design and the curriculum. By following these processes, organizations design the cross-cultural training as a "one-size-fits-all" event. Every expatriate-to-be is expected to fit well in such a training structure. On the other hand, the issues involved in a cross-cultural training is so complicated—for example, personality, cultural rigors, interpersonal skills and so on— that many traditional design methods can not be easily applied. Most importantly, the fact that trainees of any cross-cultural training program are experienced adults—they are middle to top managers, lead technicians, or public relation personnel—is often overlooked. As adult educators have pointed out, those adults experience, learn, react, and self-perceive differently from school children. School children have their teachers define a subject matter, assign readings to learn about the subject, and administer exams to measure individual mastery of the subject matter. In today's world a adult's ability to learn from his or her experience and resourcefulness is invaluable. It is a common occurrence for adults to be asked to define a problem, locate the appropriate learning materials, and demonstrate both subject matter comprehension and the ability to apply the knowledge to the job or for personal development. These needs call for thoughtful, autonomous learners rather than dependent learners. Therefore, *how* the cross-cultural training should be conducted will be strongly dependent upon those adults' learning styles, abilities, and their life experiences.

Malcolm Knowles (1980) assumes that adult learners have the following characteristics: 1) They join a learning activity with the self image of being mature, self-directing, and responsible adults; 2) Their experiences are considered to be a valuable resources for their learning. They learn more effectively by contributing their experiences to learning situations and relating their experiences to new knowledge; 3) Adults are aware of specific learning needs generated by real life tasks or problems; 4) Adults are "performance-centered" and have immediate intentions to apply what they have learned to real life problems. That is, adults are more interested in learning *how* to do than *what* to do. Based on these assumptions, a cross-cultural training program would be more sensible if the course designers and the trainers acknowledged that the trainees—the adult learners— are already responsible for their learning.

This alternative approach is known as "action learning." According to Harris & Moran (1990), action learning is "a form of training that emphasizes variety of methodology and maximum participation by the learner, usually by means of some form of group process" (p.294). Reg Revans, the creator of action learning, identifies some of the assumptions about action learning which differentiates it from the traditional learning: 1) trainees will increase their learning when they reflect on what they did in training. 2) Trainees cannot rely on experts to make decisions. 3) To be the most challenged, trainees need to work on unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar settings. 4) The role of facilitators is essential. Facilitators can accelerate learning by

helping trainees constructively reflect and self-reflect. 5) Whether in individual or group learning, the organizational system as a whole should be examined (Revans, 1971).

Revans expresses learning as: L (learning) = P (programmed knowledge) + Q (questioning insight), which means learning is the function of the programmed knowledge of the past and the questioning insight needed for the future. For example, instead of teaching management, the facilitator offers ways of how to learn management and encourages learners to challenge existing assumptions and beliefs so they can come up with new ideas about management in sights.

Action learning focuses on real problems within the organization. This method believes in starting with the adult learners' actual experiences. Since action learning is built around real-life problems with real consequences, the learners are usually motivated in dealing with issues that block their understanding and their solution to the problem (Marsick, 1990). Trainees approach learning activities in cross-cultural training with a problem-solving rather than information-receiving mindset (Knox, 1988). In the case of cross-cultural training, the real problems lie in the expatriates' daily lives, in their working environment, at their homes, in their communication skills with local nationals, in their abilities to adjust to new cultures, in their abilities to handle difficult situations, and so on. The issues that block the understanding and solution to these problems may stem from misperceptions, beliefs, and prejudices that dominate or influence learners' feelings (Marsick, 1990). Since these issues are relevant in the effectiveness of real-life actions, learners who work on teams and receive feedback from their peers will have the opportunities to challenge and to be challenged by those problems, and in return, solve the problems together.

Action learning is a powerful tool for cross-cultural training. To implement this method it first requires a "just-in-time" approach to respond to current cross-cultural managerial needs, interpersonal needs, and communicational needs. Hence, the practice of action learning in cross-cultural training should be a "post-departure" training, instead of the well-accepted "pre-departure" training. Therefore, cross-cultural training should be conducted after the expatriates-to-be have the opportunities to experience the targeted cultures for which they are assigned. After they have interacted with the targeted cultures or lived in a foreign nation, performed their major duties in that particular environments, and possessed a certain degree of real-life cross-cultural experiences, the trainees should be "recalled" back to the headquarters or a training facility for further training on action learning. It does not mean that there is no need to train the expatriates before they go abroad. On the contrary, organizations still have the responsibility to prepare their expatriates in language and management development training which usually will demand extensive training time.

Secondly, once the expatriates are "recalled", action learning not only encourages but obliges trainees to discuss problems together in the set. Learners are asked to employ resources throughout the organization, using all the people skills and political acuity they can muster, to take the risk of making a major decision, and then to verify and defend that decision against the real cross-cultural problems.

Further, action learning will not be successful without the assistance from the facilitator. The role of facilitator is not to teach but to help trainees learn from exposure to cross-cultural problems and from each other. The facilitator can assist in reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection and thus help learners learn effectively from their experience (Marsick, 1990).

Finally, although action learning is an ideal technique for manager development , it is not for every organization. According to Kaelin and LeBien (1993), the first drawback of action learning is: it relies entirely on top management's cooperation and sponsorship. Another drawback is that its practice is viewed as anti-intellectual because more attention is directed towards solving the real-life problems rather than resolving cross-cultural differences. Thirdly, as pointed out, action learning works best when it applies the "just-in-time" structure which responds to present cross-cultural managerial needs. However, the timing is difficult to measure and it is difficult to respond to the needs of each individual throughout the training program.

Finally, using action learning in cross-cultural training would heavily rely on experienced and sensitive facilitators who can facilitate a group-learning environment and be willing to commit himself/herself through the duration of the training.

In summary, action learning is implemented through the combination of action and reflection seminars (Marsick, 1990). Through project work and seminars on real-life problems in the organization, learners reexamine concerns from their daily cross-cultural encounters in light of new learning. The application of cross-cultural principles and skills is essential for trainees to practice and it enables them to transfer the training experiences back into their lives. Explicit and repeated attention to learning processes ensures that trainees are equipped to handle such learning experiences during and after the training.

Conclusion

As a result of global competition, the business world today faces a greater need and demand for their employees to possess the ability to be cross-culturally sensitive. Research on cross-cultural training has made a tremendous contribution on helping businesses better prepare their expatriates for the challenges of living and working abroad. This group of expatriates who are prepared to interact with, adjust to, and appreciate with other cultures, in turn, are able to more effectively perform in the global market as expected. In addition to business and monetary benefits, both the individuals and the organizations benefit from taking advantage of this valuable human resource asset.

Using action learning as an alternative method in cross-cultural training creates a new way of thinking for most human resource professionals. It requires the support and vision of the top management. Both trainers and top management must recognize that cross-cultural training is not a panacea. It is an unusual training method which might require on-purpose "recalls." And most importantly, since people learn best when they focus on real problems in their jobs and in their lives, the trainees of cross-cultural training must first experience what they are expected to experience. Armed with their first-hand experiences in the first few weeks abroad, action learning allows expatriates to start to learn along with each other in a set. By learning how to critically reflect in the group and how to act in the cross-cultural encounters, learners are able to consciously apply what they have learned about real cross-cultural issues back to their real lives more openly.

Finally, applying action learning to cross-cultural training requires changes of perceptions from both the learners and the organizations about what learning means to adults. It is all too often the case that the action learning project becomes merely another technique which is introduced without any learning strategy and without a connection to any central method of belief about how adults learn. Therefore, caution must be given in regard to adult learning while conducting cross-cultural training.

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Filters of a Family Kind: How They Impact Global HRD -- and Why West Doesn't Always Meet East

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The way one thinks is driven by what Geert Hofstede terms "mental programming" and this impacts intercultural communication in important ways. There can be a wide disjuncture between Western thought and that found in the East. While this has received research focus, there has been little attention paid to cultural filters of a family kind and their implications for global human resource development.

Human resource development is increasingly a global enterprise, one in which failure to consider cultural differences can lead to termination of business contracts, ineffective training deliveries, loss of competitive advantages, and other negative outcomes. American HRD professionals are unevenly prepared for global projects or service with international organizations that require residence in countries bearing little resemblance visually or culturally to the United States. They may initially make false assumptions about surface similarities that prove misleading when they actually engage, over extended periods of time, in host-country business communications and social interactions (Coghill, 1994). Firms that are centered in the United States tend to espouse management policies and approaches to HRD that can be parochial and highly ethnocentric in character (Hofstede, 1993).

Recognizing Theoretical Constructs

This study explores how filters of a family kind can illuminate our understanding of how to deal with HRD in a multicultural milieu, drawing contrasts between the United States and China and to a lesser extent, Japan and Indonesia. It sets out to show how American management and HRD are largely missing the important family-related filter, and are therefore extremely vulnerable to miscue and faux pas when dealing with these Asian countries. As Pascale and Athos point out, in writing on *The art of Japanese management:*

> We Westerners think we rely principally on our anchor --our self-concept. The Japanese see themselves, less as 'anchored' than 'moored' by many lines that are tied to friends, organizational colleagues, and family (1981, p. 122).

It is a compartmentalized (Western) versus a holistic (Eastern) view, and it has major implications for how we encode and decode communications. This difference can also be characterized as low context (West) and high context (East). We cannot do business with China or expect to meet HRD needs without including family considerations. In China, "one's identity is intimately linked to cultural values regarding family and relationships" (Pratt, 1991, p. 287).

The theoretical and experiential constructs that undergird American management thinking are plainly a cultural legacy. American expatriates tend to be educated, indelibly pragmatic, imbued with Western culture and pride, and certain that the world is eager for American ways and American expertise. While the West has much to offer, it also has much to learn. Routinely, experts and technical consultants from the U.S. do not take sufficient account of the reciprocal desire of other cultures to teach and to be recognized for their centuries of coherent thought and practices.

At the very heart of most disconnects between Americans and others, particularly those in Asia, is a wide divergence of views around family. Concepts and traditions of what a family is, how it operates, and how it influences social and business relationships (which can be so intertwined as to be indistinguishable) do not transfer directly from one culture to another. These "filters of a family kind"

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are not only culture-bound but also highly personal. If they are cloudy, obscure vision, and lead to foggy or false interpretations, cross-cultural effectiveness is limited on both sides. In the absence of knowledge, our natural tendency is to default to the familiarity of our separate cultures (Adler, 1991, p. 88), thereby losing the opportunity to learn. While American monolingualism contributes to such breakdowns, it is by no means the only cause of them.

How Family Orientations Act as Filters

To develop a systemic, meta-cultural view of family orientations acting as communication filters throughout the world, a synthesis of large amounts of information is required. Investigators turn easily to studies in cultural anthropology and organizational culture. There are other rich and perhaps less ritualized sources, which can only be intimated in the space of this review.

Culture Theory. Accustomed to nuclear families, blended families, families headed by single parents and a variety of other arrangements, the geographically mobile American may have great difficulty understanding the depth of involvement Asian family members have with each other and with their communities. The Chinese path, for example, builds on ever widening circles of familial relationships, from household to clan to society (Boulding, 1988, p. 68). As Hofstede notes in his work on empirically derived dimensions of culture, images and expectations regarding family help to explain the differences between national collectivist and individualist orientations. In China, family extends outward to encompass the entire nation. In America, individual family members are valued for precisely that -- their individualism. It is the difference between centrifugal forces that diffuse group related influences outward, like ripples in a pond, (e.g., in China) and centripetal forces that pull inward from the group toward the developing individual, as in the U.S. A third variant occurs in Japan, where only the eldest son remains in the household so that the proximity and influence of extended family is modified. Hofstede refers to this as the "lineal" family structure (1991a, pp. 50-51).

Bate (1990) believes that using the "ordinary native tongue of the client system" even if in a rudimentary manner is crucial in establishing reciprocity of ideas and a basis for working together. He views this as an exchanging of paradigms and an opening to "do-it-yourself ethnography." Visions of the desired state of an organization, propelled by collaborative self-study and paradigm awareness, can then move from the "sectarian divide" that often represents the status quo to the "integrative" and finally toward the "adaptive" organization that accommodates felt need for change (p. 99). Although Bate makes no mention of family orientation, he indicates that being even a limited part of the linguistic family of the host culture is a mark of respect and a demonstration of cultural sensitivity.

Mystery Systems. Family orientations are themselves derived from what Herzberg calls "mystery systems," which he believes humans are universally determined to create. In the West, he names Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the predominant mystery systems, and in the East, he cites Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The reason for every mystery system, Herzberg states, is to provide a framework for four scientifically unanswerable inquiries: 1) Why me? 2) Whom do I turn to? 3) What should I do? and 4) Who am I? (1995, p. 245). Each mystery system conforms to the criteria of having staying power, being beyond rational analysis, and allowing human participation. It is against the backdrop of such mystery systems that the meaning and experience of human individuals and their families is played out, like the wayang kulit morality plays of Indonesian theater.

Organization Development Models. Chasnoff and Muniz have proposed a "cultural awareness hierarchy" to facilitate interactions in international or intercultural settings. At the base of the hierarchy (Level I) is deeper knowledge of self. Level II requires an honest assessment of technical/professional skills which, if lacking, no amount of cultural knowledge can overcome. Level III acknowledges the importance of factors "beyond culture;" that is, factors which are more circumstantial than cultural but which are often erroneously attributed to cultural differences (e.g., poverty). Awareness can then proceed to the fourth level of the hierarchy, where we confront and consciously accept the influence of our own culture and acknowledge culturally induced behaviors without feeling the need to use these as standards for measuring others. Level V recognizes the need to understand cultural features unique to our own country, not shared by similar cultures. At Level VI, the cultural differences we think we are finding

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may finally be explored and confirmed or rejected on the basis of further evidence and experience (1989, p. 131). Given the importance and complication of each level, impatience is hardly a virtue regardless of our cultural origins or family orientations. It may be that one of the hallmarks of successful multicultural organization development is the adjustment of contemporary American preference for instant results toward a long-range, multilevel, reciprocal development process such as Chasnoff and Muniz describe.

A comparison of assumptions about change (Marshak, 1993) makes direct reference to the ways in which American HRD practitioners may miss the mark in Asian countries where Confucian teachings overlay the Eastern mystery systems. Largely influenced by Lewinian organization development strategies which are linear, progressive, goal-oriented, and planned, we are not prepared to view change as Confucian thinkers do: as cyclical, proceeding through orderly stages, journey-oriented, and harmonious. The Lewinian position is that disequilibrial states are necessary for change, and that these are effective because they are unusual enough to force organizations toward a new state of equilibrium. In contrast, the Confucian perspective is that everything is naturally in harmony, and perfect. One acts "correctly" to restore harmony when it is disrupted, but such disruptions are a normal occurrence in a universe always in a dynamic state of change. Correctness reflects well on the family and the society, but confrontation is not harmonious and is discouraged.

Method of Inquiry

Review of literature regarding the practice of international HRD yields an increasing quantity of ethnographic data and researcher/practitioner assumptions about the influence of "families" of ideas and cultural values on multicultural work relationships. Writers have tended to develop general constructs or classifications describing contrasting cultural variables, speaking in terms of similarities in country clusters (Osman-Gani & Jacobs, 1992) and divergence in country cultural attributes. But references to the role actual human family and community systems play in determining the nature of work and how that work is interpreted are less available. Focusing on Asia in general and China in particular has narrowed the scope of this study but also raised further questions that, given the long isolation of China from the research community, are insufficiently answered. Researchers found relevant information in literature scattered across a wide band of disciplines that are not conventionally represented in the reading lists of HRD professionals. This in itself may help to explain why the impact of family systems in multicultural environments is still largely unresearched if not unnoticed.

The questions with which the authors began were framed by anticipation that models of professional preparation for undertaking HRD or other organizational leadership in international settings could be found, synthesized and interpreted. At the very least, the researchers hoped to determine what personal goals, characteristics, insights, or communication skills are needed by such leaders to make them successful in multicultural assignments. There was also an explicit assumption that mental sets or cognitive maps about family and individual roles and responsibilities would be a major factor in such assignments, and that both verbal and non-verbal communication would be filtered through schema that define for each individual what "family" is and how it impinges on work environments.

Findings

The additional avenues for questioning that have opened during the literature review are necessarily left for future study. The researchers offer only initial, exploratory findings, encouraging others to continue the search for ways in which an understanding of family filters can alter international HRD practice. For example, comparative studies of family structures and rules about education and work in separate Asian nations could be instructive. Because we are always relating new information to what we already know, there is a probable tendency to overgeneralize about cultures in the Asian spheres of influence and even about cultures within a nation as vast and variously ethnic as China.

The most salient result of the current study is confirmation from a variety of sources of the importance of recognizing the one-way cultural visions we bring to the workplace. Certainly as we enter the global HRD arena, we tend to take far too much for granted, short-sighted as we are by impressions

that our cultural lens alone cannot correct. We are particularly unable to see a multicultural work force as a collection of different family systems, with resulting orientations unlike our own. While we are aware of our common humanity, we do not know or understand what is going on in each other's minds and hearts and often do not know how to ask. The constraints and freedoms we think everyone should have may appear as bondage to other people, who value harmony, filial piety, and uncertainty avoidance and who are convinced from head to toe that the good of the family, the community, and the country take precedence over fulfillment of individual capabilities and desires. These findings and findings in other relevant categories are reported and referenced below.

Qualities Global HRD Leaders Need. An interesting study regarding the qualifications of international developers (not limited to HRD professionals) reports the following:

> Research on the effectiveness of overseas development workers suggests that, in general, women rate more highly than men on the skills and attitudes said to be associated with overseas effectiveness... Among the gender differences...are that women express less concern about status or advancement (while men place higher value on upward mobility); women express a greater predeparture desire for contact with the local culture, and overseas are more involved in the culture; women place more value on and devote more time to learning the local language; women express more liberal attitudes toward development and are seen by their peers as being more caring of others; and that while women admit to experiencing greater difficulty in adjusting to a foreign environment than do men, they also report greater professional satisfaction. (Wilson & Whitmore, p .61).

This is not to suggest that men who are comfortable with change and with nurturing roles would not do equally well, but does emphasize the interpersonal relationship-building that is crucial to success. Another researcher offers a German citation claiming that:

> The "one-world-manager" should, according to a member of the Volkswagen board of directors, Martin Posth, "become submerged in foreign cultures and thus come to study them; be able to think within the framework of the foreign culture; have a high level of frustration tolerance; be competent in conflict situations; create synergies and make compromises; be politically sensitive...." (Bolten, 1993).

The researchers conclude that these and similar descriptions of what it takes to be effective expatriates in international settings indicate the need for self-acceptance and acceptance of others, emotional maturity, curiosity and the desire to learn, well-honed coping skills, and a willingness to suspend judgments about the new culture. They seek knowledge about cultural norms in order not to violate them personally or organizationally, because they care. Additionally, Vance & Ring (1994) recognize the obligation of the employing organization to assist indigenous workers with knowledge about how to work with expatriate personnel.

All of this is more easily said than done. A primary way to reach a respected level of cultural sensitivity is to seize every opportunity for collaborative exchanges between indigenous workers and U.S. expatriate workers. Whereas Chinese workers will constantly defer to the higher authorities in their work hierarchy (Hansen & Brooks, 1994, p. 63), they are relationship oriented, appreciate good listeners, and are direct in negotiations. Those who work in Japan find that "reading" Japanese opinions in multicultural interactions is somewhat more difficult (Keijzer, 1994, p. 19). Clearly, when we work in "the East" we do not refer to monolithic culture. As an American woman who went to live in Indonesia with her consultant husband reports, "Indonesian concepts of space, time, and things that matter are much different than we could have imagined. This was probably the hardest part of our stay here -- to understand what was going on and to have the patience necessary to view the situation in a new way...The orientation is around people [not convenience, efficiency, time, or privacy]" (Williams, 1987). She reports three levels of conflict resolution that she experienced, each oriented toward restoration of harmony, even if the Indonesians were the originators of the disharmony in the first place.

More About Cultural Understanding. The global HRD leader needs two fundamental pieces of knowledge about how HRD abroad differs from HRD in the U.S. One of these is the recognition that HRD is a macro, central government planning endeavor in most countries that seek development. The concerns are not only for training, but for labor shortages, immigrant labor policies, literacy, and a host of other development issues that may not fall within the purview of HRD in the States. Ji Ma, a graduate student at Georgia State University, gives an example of this difference (1996, interview). She came to the U.S. armed with concepts and Pacific Rim experience from her work as HRD administrative assistant and project leader in the Ministry of Personnel in China. But she reports that at first she and her American peers simply did not have a common conceptual basis for talking about HRD. She also confirms that the second major block of information largely unknown to American graduate students in HRD involves the family and work orientations which either spring from or are reinforced by local mystery systems and centuries of economic, political, and social organization unlike our own.

Macy (1991) speaks of the co-dependent arising of all aspects of life, leading to the acceptance of mutual causality as a ruling idea in Buddhist thought. She views General System Theory in Western thought as coming closest to offering a comparably interconnected view of the world. As Olds (1992) adds, "The 'embodied unity of all things' and its moral significance are central to this [Eastern mystery systems] tradition" (p. 130). Ethics or "correctness" comes from aligning harmoniously with the total pattern, so that individual excellence contributes to but does not destroy the pattern. The wisdom and authority of elders and the hierarchy of relationships in the workplace are intimately bound to these world views. Taylor (1995) reports that the rights of elders in an Asian culture may reach all the way across the Pacific to determine specific decisions about what refugee grandchildren in the U.S. may or may not do. Filial piety is a strong inheritance from Confucian thinking.

In China, although Mao's Communism liberated women legally from many previous subjugations, harmonious fit of women's skills and goals in the new China are still at issue. Educated women have opportunities, but tend not to rise to management positions. Zhi and Hong (1994) find gender equity consciousness "comparatively low" (p. 534). Under the Communist Party, a mass organization representing the interests of Chinese women functions to mobilize women in community affairs and to help provide services to them and their children. But problems of unemployed women, illegal migrant workers, and prostitutes "are not being handled adequately" (Chan, 1994, p. 98). Chinese feminists, steeped in the value of harmony, seek to avoid polarization against men because they view this as demeaning and not a proper way to contribute to the society (Bulbeck, 1994, p. 102.) At the same time, a reviewer of two modern Chinese novels questions "whether the fictional Chinese New Women have really broken away from the restrictions of Confucian patriarchal hegemony" despite their struggles for autonomy (Chien, 1994, p. 33). Clearly there are "filters of a family kind" that all but overwhelm women's efforts to contribute as fully as they might in the workplace and the Chinese society. Stockman (1994) finds that one reason may be the lack of structural separation, under Communism, of women's community and family contributions from their broader contributions to economic productivity.

Summary and Conclusions

Performing HRD tasks in other cultures is --and should be -- a humbling experience, but also a dynamic and creative one. It requires a thirst for knowledge and a longing for relationship. As Cooperrider and Pasmore suggest: Shouldn't we " 'reframe' our thinking to allow the possibility that others know more than we do about creating sustainable futures and invite them into our inquiry as partners rather than subjects?" (p. 1053). Intellectual, professional, or cultural arrogance are the American exports no other culture needs. In Singapore, that engine of economic development so startling to the West, there is a saying that, without natural resources, "Our brains are all we have" (Magaziner & Patinkin, 1989, p. 46). In international contexts, it appears that our own American brains had best be put to use in building relationships , learning, and sharing insights, not telling others how things ought to be.

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